

University of Michigan

Project Name ...

Better Health (Tailored Interventions for Multiple Behaviors)

Principal Investigator ...

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Background / Significance of Problem ...

The University of Michigan's Health Media Research Laboratory, in collaboration with Henry Ford Health System, is evaluating the impact of a longitudinal computer-based tailored print intervention and complementary web-based tailored telecounseling intervention among roughly 3,000 HMO enrollees.

Research Question ...

Through a randomized, 2x2 factorial trial, we are determining effectiveness of the interventions, both individually and in combination, in achieving behavior change in three targeted health risk behaviors: low vegetable consumption, cigarette smoking, and sedentary behavior. Three- and twelve-month behavioral effects of the individual and combined treatments are being evaluated.

Features of the project include: (1) use of multiple eHealth strategies, including the web, computer-tailored print, and the electronic medical record; (2) interaction of eHealth tools with a trained health specialist; and (3) implementation in a realistic, generalizable setting.

Findings To-Date ...

Current follow-up data provide sufficient power to examine intervention effects on vegetable consumption. Tailored print materials resulted in a .41 serving improvement in vegetable consumption three months after baseline assessment versus a .08 serving improvement among those not receiving tailored print ($p=.02$). This difference was greater among African American subjects (.61 versus -.16 serving improvement; $p=.02$).

Implications ...

[for multibehavioral and multi-theoretical approaches to behavior change]

At this stage of the trial, the tailored print material intervention is demonstrating a significant effect on vegetable consumption. We have not found this effect in the telecounseling intervention, which has not demonstrated a significantly effect on vegetable consumption, nor have we found a synergistic effect of both tailored print materials and telecounseling. Results to-date suggest that an inexpensive, high-reach program can be effective in enhancing vegetable consumption if it is tailored to the specific needs and interests of the user.

Future Research Directions ...

Tailored programs should be further tested on the World Wide Web, a far less expensive alternative to tailored print materials. These programs should also be examined for their effectiveness in maintaining long-term behavioral change.